

Alumni Spotlight: Jimmie Massie (MDiv '18)



Current title: Pastor, City Church Chelmsford

Family: Wife: Ali, Children: Eliza, Rosa, James

Favorite professors: Jim Singleton, Adonis Vidu

Favorite class: Evangelism and Discipleship in the Local Church

Favorite memory: Developing deep friendships in the corridors of Bell Hall and the beaches of the North Shore.

What have you been doing since you left Gordon-Conwell and where are you serving now?

We left Gordon-Conwell in 2018 and returned to England (where I met my British wife). Britain is a great mission field and we found an opportunity to plant a church in Essex, half an hour East of London. We've had two years preparing for launch, 18 months surviving the Pandemic, and now another 18 months of regular church life.

City Church Chelmsford has grown rapidly, welcoming former members of another local church and many newcomers. We're particularly excited about our first four baptisms. We've outgrown our original meeting place and are meeting in a local school. We're pursuing the purchase and redevelopment of the historic "Waterfront Place" building in the center of our city! (Watch our video on the link below.)

We are also working with our sending church to develop "Mission Essex"; a regional network of churches working together to plant and revitalize churches in our county. (This is also linked below.) Essex is in the fastest-growing part of the country but is sadly among the least churched. It's an exciting season of opportunity. We're casting ourselves on God's wisdom and strength and looking for partners to join us in His work.

What do you love about your work?

I get to spend tons of time in the Bible, prayer, and talking to people about Jesus! I love seeing other people grow in their love and trust in Jesus. Church planting is a broad role and I've been involved with a building project, fundraising, and planning a new coffee shop!

What are the particular joys and biggest challenges of planting a church in your context?

The biggest challenge is living in a culture where 95% of people think Jesus is irrelevant or even dangerous. It's very easy to dismiss Jesus, and people are highly skeptical of churches! Christians and churches are "spread thin" and often feel isolated and under-resourced.

A joy is seeing people gripped by the Gospel and longing to share Jesus with their neighbors. One of our members is supporting a neighbor through a difficult season and offering the hope of Jesus. It's also encouraging for me to see "every-member ministry". Recently some members spontaneously organized to support each other—without any direction from their Pastor!

How has God woven together your Gordon-Conwell education with other life events to bring you to where you are now?

Our time at Gordon-Conwell helped to establish our marriage and equip us for ministry. We came with a solid spiritual grounding from our previous local church and were enriched by interacting with a variety of Christians, churches, and para-church ministries that all shared our commitment to the Bible. The classes gave us a variety of tools to go deeper into the Bible and teach it to others. The New England context helped us think about ministry in a post-Christian context and the need for church planting and revitalization. And we developed deep friendships that continue to guide and sustain us.



What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are considering church planting outside their own country/culture?

Look for an opportunity to work with the local church! It won't be possible in every context, but I have been funded, trained, and guided by an established English church. It's a privilege to serve within their God-given vision and resources rather than coming up with and carrying my own.

Cross-cultural ministry is also an opportunity for our own discipleship. When Jesus saves us, we become "aliens and strangers" in this world. Our true home is not in America or England but with God. Cross-cultural ministry helps us live into that by forcing us to learn another culture and ask questions of our own.

Do you have any publications or links to share?

Learn more about [City Church Chelmsford](#), [Waterfront Building Project](#), and [Mission Essex](#).